



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **U.S. CHEMICAL SAFETY BOARD WILL RELEASE PRELIMINARY FINDINGS IN CHELSEA EXPLOSION INVESTIGATION DURING PUBLIC HEARING**

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 16, 2003      9 A.M. – 1 P.M.**

**WHERE: Fashion Institute of Technology (SUNY)  
8<sup>th</sup> Ave and 27<sup>th</sup> St. Entrance, 8th Floor, New York City**

**New York City officials and fire code experts will speak on effectiveness of NYC fire code**

**Community groups, public invited to comment**

**CSB BOARD AND INVESTIGATORS AVAILABLE FOR MEDIA INTERVIEWS AT 8:30 A.M.- 9:00 A.M. (Meeting Room)**

Investigators from the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) will release preliminary findings into the causes of the April 25, 2002, explosion at Kaltech Industries on 19<sup>th</sup> Street in the Chelsea district of Manhattan. The presentation will take place at the beginning of a public hearing called by the CSB to discuss the role of fire codes in preventing chemical accidents like the one in Chelsea.

That explosion injured at least 31 people, including 16 hospitalized with burns or other injuries.

Kaltech Industries Group ran an architectural sign-making operation involving the use of hazardous chemicals to etch and clean metal products. Kaltech was located in the basement, mezzanine and part of the first floor at 123 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street. The blast ripped through the elevator shaft, shattering street front windows on the first five stories. The building was occupied by a diverse group of tenants including service firms and professional offices.

The CSB will issue final findings and recommendations at a later date which may include the need for improvements in local fire codes that deal with hazardous materials. Board members will hear from officials from the Fire Commissioner's office, Department of Environmental Protection and the Building Commissioner's office, as well as a panel of experts on fire codes. The Board expects also to hear from the public, including community groups and other

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interested parties including firefighters, worker safety advocates, and business associations.

The CSB is an independent federal agency whose mission is to prevent industrial chemical accidents, save lives and protect the environment. The CSB investigates incidents and hazards, determines root causes of accidents, and issues safety recommendations to industry, labor, trade associations, professional organizations and federal and state agencies such as OSHA and EPA. Visit the web site at [www.csb.gov](http://www.csb.gov).

**Meeting Agenda:**

8:30 a.m. Media Availability: CSB Board Members and investigators

9:00 a.m. Opening remarks by CSB Chairman Carolyn Merritt and presentation of findings by investigator Steve Selk

9:30 a.m. NYC officials panel w/questions by CSB Board Members

11:00 a.m. Fire safety experts panel w/questions by CSB Board Members

12:00 p.m. Comments by interested parties and the public

1:00 p.m. Adjourn – Board Members and investigators available to media

**For further information contact:**

**Sandy Gilmour - Office 202-261-7614 Cell 202-251-5496**

**Daniel Horowitz - Office 202-261-7613 Cell 202-345-4960**